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Book Reviews.

History, Prophecy, and the Monuments. Vol. I. To the Downfall of Samaria.

By JAMES FREDERICK MCCURDY, Ph.D, LL.D., Professor of Oriental Languages in University College, Toronto. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894. Pp. xxiv. + 425. Price \$3.00.

Courage of a high order is required to write a book on the subject of ancient oriental history. Only the special student of the field knows how scattered are the facts, how shifting is the line between the known and the uncertain, the assured and the hypothetical. So rapid are the changes wrought by philology and archæology that what today is an accepted fact becomes tomorrow uncertain or false, and the structure built upon it or keyed about it, falls to pieces. Who wants to write a book that is sure to be superseded in ten years, perhaps in half the time?

Yet such books are needed today as they were never before needed, and as they will not be needed, perhaps, a decade hence. The great mass of materials relating to the history of the ancient East, which disclose so many new facts, reveal so many and so interesting new points of view, ought to be, and is capable of being, presented in connected and intelligible form to a larger circle than that of the specialists, who, indeed, themselves would be benefited by taking now and then a more general view of the large area in the limited sections of which they are working. The student of the Bible needs in an especial manner to have placed before him the results of archæological and historical research in the ancient world, in their bearing on the life and history of the Hebrews and the problems of the Old Testament.

This latter service is the one which Professor McCurdy has set himself primarily to perform. He is heartily to be praised for his endeavor and sincerely to be congratulated on its achievement. All who teach in the fields of ancient history will find their task materially lightened in the possession, now for the first time, of a good, general book of reference for students. All who wish well to the cause of sound knowledge in the sphere of Old Testament study, and a broader interpretation of Israelitish history, have reason to be grateful to the author of this volume. Now the student of the Old Testament will have, with his Driver for introduction and his Smith for Geography, also his McCurdy for History, a triad of works whose faithful and diligent study will make the Old Testament a new book, a living, fruitful book, revealing its character, purpose, truth and power as these have never before been revealed. Happy the learner in sacred lore who with open mind and earnest purpose sits at the feet of these masters!

Every worker in the field of this book will naturally look at many subjects discussed and opinions advanced by the writer from a somewhat different, and sometimes, an opposite point of view. No one student has a monopoly of ideas or knowledge, no single writer can hope to avoid all errors. In this work union and sympathy of effort between workers is indispensable. In this spirit it is our purpose to examine Dr. McCurdy's book carefully with the hope that these suggestions may be of some service in a second edition which should soon be called for.

Beginning with externals, we wish that a paper had been used which would receive ink without blotting; that an index had been provided, even though this is the first of two volumes; that for the sake of the great body of students its price were not so high. Two serious deficiencies are the meager references to authorities both ancient and modern, and the want of good maps—but one small general map of the entire region of oriental antiquity acts as the frontispiece of the volume, and must suffice for the geographical study of a period of more than two thousand years, during which political relations change rapidly, in a region whose natural features are most varied and influence greatly the social and political life of the people. That McCurdy appreciates the geographical element in history, the text of his volume abundantly proves. Hence his omission of detail maps and historical charts for special periods seems almost unpardonable. The title of the volume is a handicap to its usefulness. Who would ever imagine that the book thus entitled contained a history of oriental antiquity from the point of view of the origin and development of the Hebrew people? To be sure the book is a "history" written with the aid of material derived from the "monuments" of ancient Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, and elucidating the conditions and circumstances of Hebrew "prophecy" by which the latter is seen to be an important source of the knowledge of historical development. But one has to read the book to discover all this. Its real usefulness and service are concealed rather than revealed by the title. The author has done himself an injustice.

Two dangers which the writer has not altogether escaped are diffuseness and excessive generalization. The book might have been compressed one-eighth by removal of repetitions and condensation of reflective and commentative remarks; moreover, the many conclusions, drawn from a scanty array of facts often themselves uncertain, while interesting and fascinating, will not stand careful analysis. We are inclined to regard both of these weaknesses as not altogether inexcusable, since repetition is to a certain extent necessary in a book intended for scholastic use, and generalization, if liable to undue excess anywhere, is easily overdone in this field of oriental history where general views are so necessary, and where the scarcity of facts continually tempts to the employment of this means of organizing them.

The present volume is divided into six "Books." The first discusses "the northern Semites," their territory, the political and social constitution of these communities and their place in history. It is these peoples that occupy

the central position in the history of antiquity, to them Israel belongs, and as a member of the race it played its part among them. This "Book" deals largely in the unwarranted generalizations referred to above. Indeed the material contained in it ought for the most part never to have been put in this place. It presupposes a knowledge of the history that follows. It takes for granted acquaintance with facts that come later. The reader would do well to skip all of it except the second chapter, and go on at once to "Book" second, reserving these parts for study after the rest of the volume is finished. It is an induction and generalization from the entire field of the ancient Eastern world. When one comes back to it with the facts in mind, many statements will strike him as inadequate. The assertion of the "limitation of capacity for political organization" on the part of the Semites (p. 29) frequently urged, has always seemed to us a strong overstatement, in view of the contributions made by Babylonia and Assyria to the idea of a "world-empire." Writers forget that political organization is something to be learned by trying and that the Semites were first in the field of endeavor. They did not reach the height of Greece and Rome, because they, coming first, made it possible for these peoples to learn by their failures and successes. Not capacity, but opportunity, was the cause of the imperfect political achievements of the Semites. The remarks on the character of the Semitic city (pp. 32-34) rest partly on the limitation of the view to the Syrian cities where the geographical character of the land explains their "isolation and repulsion" and partly on doubtful etymologies, like *kiryath* "meeting-place" (?) and *alu* whose relation to *ohel* "tent" is questionable. Again, when one reads the summary on p. 61 of the results of the discussion showing the "lack of permanence and solidity in almost all political combinations found among the Semites" and its explanation found "in the fact that delegated power is foreign to Semitic notions and methods of government," the question is irresistibly suggested: Did the Semites differ from the Greeks in these particulars? All antiquity, Eastern or Western, had difficulty in working out any system of "delegated power." All antiquity before Rome showed lack of political permanence and solidity. We only register our own opinion, however, when we question whether the author has succeeded in showing the remarkable difference between Hebrew political organization and that of the other Semites; indeed the avowed purpose of making the whole discussion revolve about the history of Israel seems to us to involve the plan and organization of the book in confusion, to compel the author to a series of prejudgments, and finally to fail of satisfactory justification in the facts and development of the history contained in the book itself.

"Books" two to four bring the history of the ancient world up through Babylonia, Egypt, Syria and Assyria, to the entrance of the Hebrews into Canaan. Much of great interest and value is brought out, particularly the startling and important fact of the early predominance of Babylonian authority and civilization in western Asia. The author is an unflinching advocate

of the Semitic origin of Babylonian culture against the so-called Sumerian theory. This view will undoubtedly be modified by further researches but such a presentation is valuable. The empire of Sargon and Naram-Sin is placed at the beginning of history, a view which is not capable of adequate proof, while our best authority, Hilprecht, declares that "the kings of 'Shirpurla' are earlier than Sargon" (O. B. T. p. 19).

With "Books" five and six the position of Israel becomes central and commanding in the narrative. The Hebrew struggle with Canaanites and Aramæans for predominance in Syria and the steady progress of Assyrian ascendancy in the West as it affected northern Israel are clearly and strongly described. The tragedy of Samaria's fall closes the volume. The central defect of this part of the discussion is the lack of thoroughgoing criticism of the historical books of the Old Testament. The books of Samuel appear to be taken as homogeneous. Chronicles is an authentic source. Difficulties are slipped over without comment or suggestion. This is true of the account of the introduction of David to Saul's court (p. 240) and of the story of the foundation of the kingdom (pp. 55, 56, 236-238). It is gratifying, however, to notice that the compilatory element in the biblical books is recognized as well as the preëminence of the religious element in them (pp. 12, 13). There is also some carelessness in statements of detail. Ehud, after assassinating the king of Moab "returned over the Jordan" (p. 230). The remark that Solomon's temple was built on the *Moriah* peak of Zion (p. 250) is confusing. Jeroboam is said (p. 254) to erect shrines "to other deities as well as Jehovah." Ahab gave "statutory authorization to the formal establishment of the Phœnician Cult" (p. 258). "Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab against Damascus cost the latter his life" (p. 260) is a loose statement. Jehu is "twice anointed" king (p. 283). The author's view of the prophets seems to waver between the older and the later view. Their writings are regarded as a source of history higher than the historical books, yet they cover less than three centuries. Their interest in the politics of their times is intense (p. 15) yet it was secondary and indirect (p. 338). They only "interfered" in public affairs on special occasions (p. 339).

Of foreign nations and their relations to Israel we note the following points. In Babylonian matters, Cyrus (p. 81) is said to have turned the waters of the Euphrates before the capture of Babylon! The Delitzsch theory, long since recognized as doubtful, of a Babylonian "Eden" is accepted. The "Synchronistic history" arose out of a feeling of "kinship" between the two peoples of Assyria and Babylonia (p. 86)! The Terahite origin of the Hebrews from southern Babylonia is asserted (p. 25). Assyria is founded by emigrants from Babylonia (p. 23). The meaning "highland" is given to Elam (p. 125). The "Hettites," as McCurdy calls them, occupy a prominent, perhaps more than their rightful place, in the volume. It is rather precarious to speak of the "Hettite régime" in Palestine (p. 226). Certainly it is strange to read (p. 198) that the greatest service of the Hettites was in keeping the

Egyptians out of Palestine. When was this ever the case? Kadesh is called their southern capital (p. 201) which it could not have been according to Müller's investigations. Indeed McCurdy's whole discussion of the Egyptian period of dominance over western Asia, needs to be rewritten in the light of Müller's *Asien und Europa*, particularly the geographical passages on pp. 160-162. Such mistakes as *the* Rutenu (p. 175), Naharain (p. 175) for Nahrina would then have been avoided. So should our author have escaped the error of calling Thi, the wife of Amenophis IV., and referring to her mummy (p. 181). Her Asiatic origin is exceedingly problematical, as is also the probability of Chuenaten's violent death (p. 277). The Exodus is placed toward the end of the reign of Ramses III., *i. e.*, about 1200 B.C. (p. 204), the entrance into Canaan about 1160 B.C. Some views of the author concerning Palestine before the conquest are interesting. The Canaanites came from the north into Palestine (p. 154) yet on p. 168 they move *upward* over Jezreel into Phœnicia. This is confusing. A strong argument is urged in favor of distinguishing the Amorite from the Canaanite. They are regarded as two different peoples (p. 160). On p. 25 the Amorites are "non-Semitic." Cushanrisha-thaim is an Aramæan king of Mesopotamia (p. 230). His invasion the author places before Tiglathpileser I., *i. e.*, before 1120 B.C. But as Canaan was entered according to our author in 1160 B.C., a period of but forty years at the most is allowed for the conquest and first settlement before this invasion. While we are on chronology, observe (on p. 255) that Shishak reigned to B.C. 924 but is said to have invaded Judah in 920 B.C. The Egyptian king is said to have captured *Gaza* (p. 251) for Solomon, not *Gezer*, as in 1 Kings 9:16. Is this a misprint? The Chronicler's Zerah is Osorkon I. (a misprint for O. II.)! McCurdy's opinion of the Assyrians is very unfavorable. Is it true that "the satisfaction of the lust of power and gain was always the practical end of their conquests" (p. 207)? That Assyria regarded itself as the heir of Babylonian sovereignty in the west (p. 213) is doubtful, since the testator was still alive. On p. 261 Asshur-dan I. (why not Ashshur-dan or Assur-dan?) should be A. II. Did Jehu really make a league with Assyria and become a "fawning suppliant" (p. 287)? There is much doubt whether Ramman-nirari III. ever made an expedition into Israel. "Mantsuati" (p. 298) proves nothing, as a careful reading of II. R in the passage cited will show. What makes our author so certain as to state positively that Hezekiah received a visitation and warning from Sargon (p. 331)?

In the use of geographical terms we note the incorrect Leontes (for Litany) and Anti-Lebanon. We must confess that the way of spelling the names of cities and countries is very confusing. Sometimes the name is given the technical spelling and put in italic, and a few lines down it receives transliteration unto the ordinary nomenclature and roman type. Modern and ancient names are used interchangeably. We have the mention of Aramæan tribes near "Baghdad" (p. 336), also "Aleppo" and "Beyrut." Where did our author get the extraordinary Caelo-Syria? "Asshur" (p. 229) is a mis-

print for Asher. Another misprint is "principle" (p. 147). A curious ambiguity of language is found on p. 75 — Israel "was less than one hundred times as large as Assyria." Another confused statement is made at the bottom of p. 410 about the famous year 763 B.C., and its eclipse. Does the writer hold that we get the date 763 B.C., apart from the eclipse and that then the astronomical reckoning corroborates it?

A word of hearty praise for this excellent book, which we have found to be not without its grave weaknesses, should close this notice. The value of it is beyond all question. The conception which pervades it respecting the necessity of putting Hebrew history into its relations to other contemporaneous history in order rightly to understand it, is admirable. Equally valuable is the recognition of the religious element in all oriental history. The great fact of pre-Israelitish history, viz., the predominating Babylonian influence in western Asia is kept constantly in view and its significance duly emphasized. The deep meaning underlying the historical career of Israel, while in details sometimes exaggerated, is yet steadily and rightly insisted upon. Indeed, as we have already intimated, the book is simply indispensable to any one who would understand the Old Testament history.

G. S. G.

Manual of Egyptian Archæology and Guide to the study of Antiquities in Egypt. For the Use of Students and Travelers. By G. MASPERO, D.C.L., Oxon. Translated by Amelia B. Edwards. New Edition, Revised and Enlarged by the Author. With three hundred and nine Illustrations. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1895.

This indispensable companion of the tourist in Egypt, or of the Egyptian enthusiast anywhere is already familiar to us under the title, "Egyptian Archæology," which passed through three editions. Maspero's wide experience in the field and extensive knowledge of the material have enabled him to present a work, which will undoubtedly be widely used in the future as it has heretofore been, and we repeat that for the student of Egypt the book is indispensable. Nevertheless, if the book has enjoyed the personal supervision of the author, as the title assures us it has, there are many things which must be explained. Passing over the arrangement of the book, and the method pursued in the treatment (for they are the same as in the previous editions), we take up some special points.

In the first place it is really incredible that Maspero should have retained his strikingly unsystematic treatment of the Egyptian dwelling-house in the first chapter. Any one who will compare it with the clear and methodical treatment of Erman, will wonder how his results could have been ignored by Maspero; but the only improvement Maspero offers is the insertion of a few plates from Petrie's "Illahun, Kahun and Gurob." Moreover, the unpardonably incorrect plan of the so-called "Palace of Ai" reappears as in all the